



# PHOTOVOICE NARRATIVES:

## Economic Development & Investment



### The Divide

Louisvillians all know what "The Ninth Street Divide" is. But few have a full understanding of the history behind its existence, its continuation as the symbolic and geographic isolation of half of the community, or the realities of living on the wrong side of the divide. I have hope that someday, our community will not be divided, and life experiences and outcomes will not be determined by which side of Ninth Street someone lives.



### Check's

Check's has been open for 72 years (since 1944). It's pretty amazing to have a small business that's been around for that long. Every day, there's always a crowd at Check's, with people sitting outside, catching up with neighbors, and eating cheap food. It's a great gathering place, and they share information about what's happening in the neighborhood- like the sign on the side advertising the Schnitzelburg Fall Walk. Schnitzelburg in general has a lot of small, locally owned businesses, which I think helps bring a

sense of community and provides spaces for gathering.



**At the groundbreaking for the California Commercial Center, Phase I, 18th & Garland, Louisville, September 1986**

In 1981, the four elders pictured in the foreground – Mrs. Jesse Linton, Mrs. Lucille Wright, Mrs. Lizzella Pye, and Mr. Climmie J. Hunt – approached the City on behalf of the California Federation of Block Watch Clubs, looking to build a pharmacy to serve the aging residents of their neighborhood. Working with public officials, with the Legal Aid

Society and with business people from a distillery and a paint and varnish company located nearby, the neighborhood met again and again, and planned, and negotiated, and persevered along a difficult path that to some of us outsiders seemed, on more than one occasion, to hold no further promise.

Persuaded however by the dedication of the neighborhood to their vision, in 1985 Mr. Tommie Burns and the Newcomb Oil Co. of Shelbyville joined the California Federation as partners and agreed to build a convenience store in what was to be the first phase of a new shopping center at 18th and Garland.

On the day of this groundbreaking thirty years ago, the two city officials standing at the rear of the photo were, like me, only in our 30's or early 40's, while each of the ladies and the gentleman in the foreground were in their mid-to-late 70's – born and raised in a Louisville very different than anything I could imagine then, or that anyone could imagine today. Not too long after this picture, Mrs. Linton passed away, and then Mr. Hunt, and Mrs. Allen, and finally Mrs. Pye, all within a few very short years.

There's an old saying that "society grows great when our elders plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." Although the remainder of the shopping center would never be finished, the site adjacent the new store on 18th Street was later to be dedicated as a neighborhood park. Every time I drive by, I think of how these venerable souls – through quiet force of will – created something for the good and by doing so demonstrated that, indeed, hope springs eternal.



## **Schnitzelburg**

One of my favorite parts about Schnitzelburg is that it's so walkable. From my house I can get to several restaurants, bars and parks. Across from Monnik there's a dentist and law offices and another locally-owned restaurant. Sometimes just for fun, I'll take walks around my neighborhood to see what else I can discover. I think it's one of the few neighborhoods in Louisville that still has a pretty robust mix of residences and businesses (which I also think has to do with zoning laws). It

gives me hope to live somewhere that I feel so comfortable walking and exploring, and that has a lot of amenities built in



## **Syringe Exchange Program as a paradigm**

This photo gives me hope for Louisville as it represents our progressive government's willingness to work with a burdened population to prevent disease transmission. The Syringe Exchange Program was an instance where politics did not get in the way of science, and I am hopeful that there will be many more such examples to come.